

ENCLOSURE

MEMORANDUM BY THE CHIEF OF STAFF, U.S. ARMY

for the
JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

on

POSSIBLE EMPLOYMENT OF ATOMIC BOMBS IN KOREA

20 November 1950

1. The apparent overt intervention of Chinese Communist forces in the Korean conflict and their capability further to augment the forces opposing Commander in Chief, United Nations Command (CINCUNC), raises anew the question of possible use by UN forces of the atomic bomb. While, at the present time, it appears that conventional air strikes will be effective in preventing any buildup of enemy forces sufficient to threaten the UN position, I feel that the Joint Chiefs of Staff should bring this problem under study.

2. It is conceivable that the Joint Chiefs of Staff will be required to present their views concerning the use of the atomic bomb in Korea on short notice. It is also conceivable that, in the event of an all-out effort by the Chinese Communists, the use of atomic bombs against troop and materiel concentrations might be the decisive factor in enabling the UN forces to hold a defensive position or to effect the early drive to the Manchurian border.

3. In view of the above I consider that a study should be made to determine the conditions under which the employment of atomic bombs would be indicated, the targets suitable for atomic attack that might present themselves under these conditions, and what additional preparations, if any, both policy-wise and operational-wise, we should be undertaking to insure our ability to use this bomb if and when we deem it appropriate.

4. I recommend, therefore, that this matter be referred to the appropriate committees of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for comment and recommendations as a matter of priority.

Enclosure